

Round Robin #2  
Foolscap 2008  
Kristin F.

I'm an eraser. I live on ~~an~~ an oak desk in a small  
~~apartment~~ in Redmond, Washington. You would think being an eraser  
~~is~~ would be an eventful job, a job full of adventure and, well  
erasing.

You'd be wrong. Being an eraser in a modern world is a dull  
dull job. Afterall who needs me since every household got a computer?  
The only things that get revised anymore go into the computer from  
the very start.

"Oh, it makes think ~~is~~ so easy to revise," people say.

No one cares about craftsmanship any more.

I've been sitting ~~on~~ on this desk being ignored for ten  
years, and I'm getting ~~crunchy~~ around the edges. I guess I should  
be grateful my slob doesn't ~~clean~~ clean her desk very often

But really, getting thrown in a wastebasket would be an improve-  
ment. It would make for a change of scenery at least...

\* \* \*

*Storms.*

So here I am in a garbage can with an applecore chattering away in some  
fruity language. She seems to be a bit insane. It scares me immensely. What, is  
this? THE Garbage man? No, it's some little boy who came to dump more gar-  
bage on me! I can't believe him! I want to go to the dump! How dare he  
defy me with his not being the garbage man!

\* \* \*

Gene B.

Wait! The boy has seen me, he reaches past the crumpled papers and sticky  
candy wrappers to pull me back into the light.

"I could use an eraser," the boy says. Then he placed me in his  
pocket. I just want to say right now that a young boy's pocket is not exact-  
ly the most pleasant of places. Pocket lint goes without saying, but there  
was also a dust encrusted peppermint, a pencil stub, two marbles, a battery,

two pebbles and a small frog.

The amphibian seemed as miserable as I felt. It wiggled around ~~it~~ in its damp way, gave me a sniff, and then squeaked, "Are you edible?"

\* \* \* \* \*

Edible...is that what I have been reduced to? Sure, I thought. Eat me. The thick, sticky tongue of the frog extended out and found me as un-palatable as the world had found me. If a frog could wind, it would have. Typical.

In my dismay, I shrugged, and was delighted to realize that the soft, ping substance of my body was responsive. I could move. I was alive, and I could move.

That meant that I could escape!

\* \* \* \* \*

Karen G. Anderson

The little boy had begun running, and I found myself bouncing along in his pocket, making plans for my escape. I tried to edge away from the frog, while staying clear of the marbles. I heard a dark voice. "Follow me," it said. "Wait til you hear the scream, then head for the light." Puzzled, I peered around the dark pocket. Suddenly, the pencil jabbed, ripping a hole in the pocket of the kid's jeans. I caught a glimpse of sidewalk and grass below.  
EC

"Have you been outbb before?" the pencil asked.

"You mean, outside the big oak desk?"  
"You havent' even been off a desk?" You poor sheltered thing. I should have known by your soft, pink flesh, hardly rubbed at all. Stick close to me and I'll show you the world. I spent a month in the pocket of JFK. You don't know who that is, of course, but he was exciting. One of his secret Service guys found me on the ground in Lafayette Park. Unfortunately, he lost me right before meeting with the President of France. I Miss those glorious days."

The pencil didn't show any sign of shutting up, and I longed for the

peace of the wide oak desk, the familiar if pathetic clutter of Starbucks to go cups and M&M wrappers. The pencil was mad; he called me soft and pink, but did he not see the darkened edges? My stiff, leathery hide? He wanted something from me, and I shuddered to think what this s tubby, splintery old writing stick might want. Never trust the writing utensils, they told me in the pink pearl factory, for they write lies which it is our duty to erase.

\* \* \*

Jack F.

They had hispered darker truths, as well; the stories of the Great Erasure when all slates would be wiped clean and the world swept from lies, truth, knowledge, stories, proofs, and all human creations to ignorance. This would be our final purpose and destiny: to make the world void, if slightly smudged. Was this pencil to be the agent of my part in this?

\* \* \*

"Now is the time for all good men to come to aid of their parties," the pencil said.

What's that supposed to mean, I wondered. But not knowing the pencil's intentions, nor his mental health, I hesitated to ask.

K. Marier

"Tabula rasa," whispered the pencil softly. Was he imagining it or was there a touch of dread in the soft voice. "same Broom Sweeps Clean kata from kung fu. The Great Awakening. Singularity. The time when all that is unnecessary is erased from existence."

"By whom?" I asked. The pencil shuddered ever so slightly.

"No one really knows. Most of us think it won't be the humans as they couldn't distinguish between things and reality if their lives depended on it. They like to think well of themselves. Certainly we are guilty of helping them along in that endeavor. But when the stars align in 2012, we shall see."

"That has that to do with anything," I scoffed. All this talk of things mystical had me reaching for my coffee mug to stave off a headache.

Foolscap Round robin , page 4

"Well the four sorcerers from the Popul Vuh come to mind; but they only occur in human stories so I don't give them much credence. "

Truthfully, all I (Keffy) know now is roughly what I knew back then which was roughly nothing . Thusly , I suggested that we dance.

And thusly, we did.

We danced for all the ages, as though this was all the world was created for.

SOMEWHAT PREDICTABLY, THE WORLD THEN IMPLoded.

Tradition decreed that we then marry, lest our destruction be illegitimate. \* EC\*

Only slowly did I regain consciousness. What strange writing chemicals had the pencil given me, hoping to share his madness? I woke to the smell of burning wood. A man, wizened and smelling of nail polish remover, was bending over the smoking corpse of the pencil. My savior, perhaps? The factory had never told me of humanity saving my kind. they were our destruction and our masters , forever providing us with purpose, though that purpose led us unto death

But was this my only purpose possible? I had come far since the cluttered oak desk. But was my adventurous fate to end as the lying pencil? He had been mad and a liar, but true to his nature--a teller of tales.

"Why have you done this?" I asked the man. I knew I'd receive no response but I had to ask.

"I need the wood," he responded.

I'd never felt so small.. Surely this was the eraser savior, able to talk to the office supplies.

G.B.

"Have you anything that needs erasing?" I asked, feeling just a glimmer of hope amidst the dread.

The man smiled a mildly enigmatic smile and blew softly on the embers which were all that remained of the pencil.

"If not, of course, that's fine with me," I continued.

The man continued to blow gently on the embers. After a moment he asked, "Hasn't it bothered you that we're all still here, after the world has exploded?"

I confess that I had worried about that.

"An eraser doesn't have much in the way of brains, I understand," the man said. "I don't mean that as an insult, mind you. It's simply a statement of fact. You are composed of pink rubber and small quantities of an abrasive, usually pumice. Not much room for a central nervous system at all."

"But I have needs, feelings, aspirations!" I protested.

"That's being a bit generous, don't you think?" the man asked. "You have precisely one aspiration, which is to erase. And even that has been imposed upon you by your maker. It is possible that you have a soul, but it does not appear to be much of one."

"That may be so," I admitted, "but how much of a soul does it take to concoct notions such as war, murder, or musical theatre? I don't think humans have much justification to go feeling superior on that account."

The man shook his head. "There is no feeling of superiority. ~~XX~~ Most of man's aspirations are derivatives of a paltry few imposed upon us by our own biology. ~~Complexity~~ Our needs and aspirations may be more complicated than yours, but complexity is hardly inherently superior to simplis~~ity~~ty."

"Then why bring it up?"

"Why not?" the man replied. "But now, my little friend, I must be going. ~~And~~ And so must you."

The man picked me up. I thought we was going to put me into a ~~rubber~~ pocket. Instead, he pulled a small metal case from a nearby backpack. When he opened the case I saw several ~~x~~ pencils of varying lengths, two graphite

sticks, ~~and~~ a pencil sharpener, and several erasers. White, black, and even a lumpy grey eraser. All were covered in smudges of graphite. All the instruments in the case looked well-used. I could almost feel the love radiating from them.

"And we have much work to do," the man said, as he closed the case around me.